

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-35 (Cancelled).

Claim 36 (Previously presented): A biodegradable, oxidized cellulose ester having the following general formula I or II:

I.

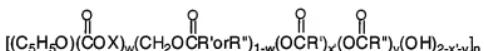


wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of H, Na, K, Ca, NH₄, and NEt₃H;
whereby R is (CH₂)_nCOOH, where n is 2 to 4;
w is 0.1-1.0;
x is 0.1-2.0; and
n is 30-1500.

and

II.



wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of H, Na, K, Ca, NH₄, and NEt₃H;
R' and R" are each selected from the group consisting of: H; CF₃; (CH₂)_nCH₃, where n is from 0 to 18; (CH₂)_nCOOH, where n is from 1 to 8; CY=CZCOOH, where Y and Z are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, branched alkyl having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and from one to three *cis* or *trans* double bonds; branched alkenyl

having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and having from one to three *cis* or *trans* double bonds; CY-CH₂, where Y is H, methyl, or phenyl; CH=CHY, where Y is C₆H₅; CH=CYCOOH, where Y is H or CH₃; (CH₂)₈CH=CH(CH₂)₈CH₃; or C₆H₍₂₋₆₎(COOH)₀₋₄, CH₂CH(COOH)CH₂-COOH;

w is 0.1-1.0;

x' is 0.1-1.9;

y is 0.1-1.9; and

n is 30-850;

said biodegradable oxidized cellulose ester having an acid number of at least 133.

Claims 37-40 (Cancelled).